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An
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Podagra or Gout.
Submitted to the examination
of the
Medical Professors
in the
University of Pennsylvania
by
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of Dover
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Podagra or Gout.

One of the most painful and distressing diseases to which the human system is liable is Gout.

Notwithstanding the disease has been noticed ever since the dawn of Medical Science, and much has been said by different authors concerning the cause of it, yet it still remains to be a matter unsettled, as to the true nature of the disease, and the best mode of treating it.

The term, *Gout*, is said to be derived from the French, *Goutte*, a drop.

Chapter 1st.

The first part is

The ancients believed that
all, or at least most of the diseases ac-
companied with swelling or tumefaction,
were attributable to a flow of morbid
humours to the part affected, which
was called a defluxion, and the
defluxion or rheum, was denomina-
ted, Cold, Hot, &c. according to the na-
ture of the different symptoms. And to
this cause was ascribed by the
Arabian writers, the various diseases
of the eyes, which were called Gutta
serena, Gutta obscura &c. according to
their different appearances. —

Barbave, considers
gout to be a vitiated disposition
of the very minute vessels and nerves
in the body, from their too great
straitness, rigidity; and also of the

liquids which nourishes the nerves
from its acrimony and greater
tenacity. -

Hoffman says that it is a
saline tartarous substance, whilst
some consider it a corrosive bil-
ious salt, others an Acid, an earth
an Alkali &c.

It has generally been
thought that the disease depends
upon a certain morbid matter
always present in the system; and
that this matter by certain causes
thrown upon the joints and other
parts, produces the several phenom-
ena of the disease. -

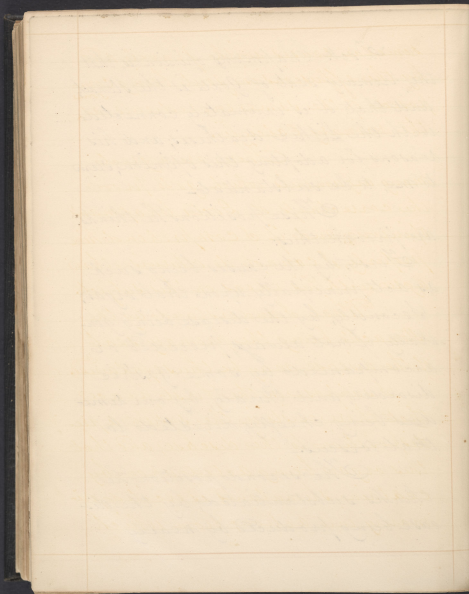
Doct. Chapmans opinion is, that the primary seat of Goats is the Stomach, and that it is intimately connected with the Lithic diathesis; and his reasons for adopting this opinion, seem to me, to be substantial.

These positions he thinks are proven thus:

First, by the causes being such as act principally upon that organ,

Secondly, by the disease being generally if not always, preceded or accompanied by some gastric disorder; and thirdly, by our remedies being chiefly, directed to that viscus.

The second position, he thinks substantiated, by the disease being produced by nearly



similar causes with gravel, and by the effusions in gout being composed of the same ingredients as ^{some} the urinary Calculi.

There are a great many arguments which go to prove the correctness of Doctor Chapman's opinion; and if I comprehend him properly, I cannot do otherwise, than agree with his ideas on this subject.

What I understand by the Stomach's being the primary seat of the disease, may be thus explained.

I suppose in the first place, that there exists in the system a predisposition to the disease, and that this organ being acted upon by certain stimulants is excited primarily into action, from which

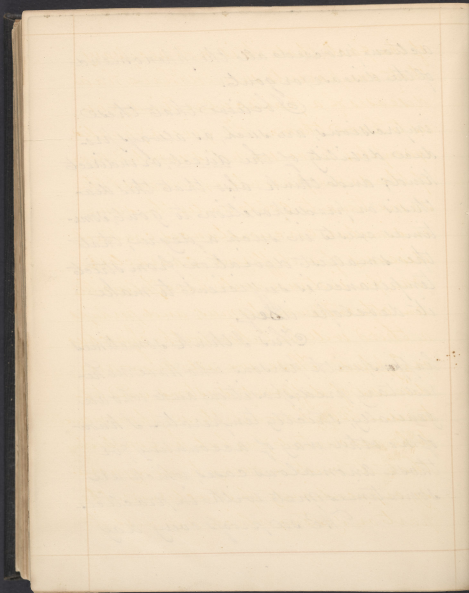
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edges of the pages are
worn and discolored.

action proceeds all the phenomena
of the disease, or gout.

I believe that these
impressions, are such, as always pro-
duce debility of the direct, or indirect
kind; and think also that this dia-
thesis or predisposition to gout, some-
times exists in such a degree, that
the smallest deviation from strict
temperance is sufficient to make
it develop itself.

This I think sometimes
happens, with persons who have no he-
reditary predisposition, and who are
generally, strictly temperate. I know
of no other way of accounting for
those anomalous cases, which are
sometimes met with in practice.

We see proofs every day

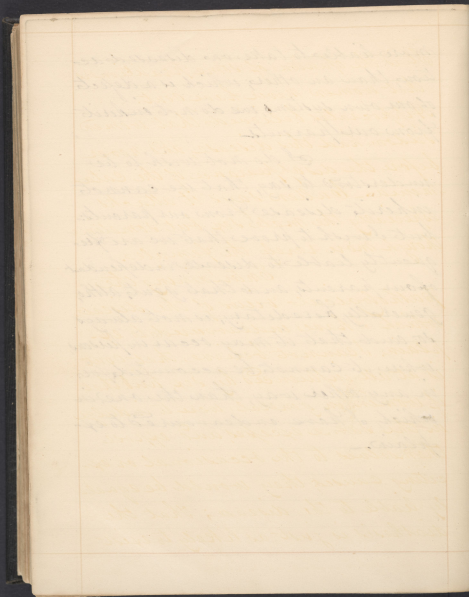


of the fact, that, it is not necessary
that our parents should have had
diseases of a particular kind, for
us to have them. To give a familiar
example; Have we not seen children
of the same parents, exposed at the
same time to colds, under the same
or similar circumstances, contract
diseases of a different character?

one, for instance will have Flecuritis;
an other Rheumatismus; and perhaps
a third will be taken with Synochus
or Typhus. These we all know are
diseases of different systems and tex-
tures. — Now how are these phenomena
to be accounted for, but by concluding
that it must be owing to idiosyncra-
sy, or peculiarity of structure in the
part or system, which renders it

more liable to take on diseased ac-
tion, than an other; which is a defect
of our own systems, we do not inherit
from our parents.

I do not wish to be
understood to say, that we cannot
inherit disease from our parents:
but I wish to prove that we are fre-
quently liable to disease, independant
of our parents, and that gout, altho,
generally, hereditary, is not always
so; and that it may occur in persons,
where, it cannot be accounted for
in any other way, than the one, in
which, I have endeavoured to ex-
plain. —



It is the opinion of some Practitioners
that women never have gout.

Hippocrates believed that women
seldom had this disease, and never
before the disappearance of the cata-
menia. Cullen says, "it attacks
especially the male sex, but sometimes
though more rarely the female."

Entertaining the
pathological views of the disease
which I have endeavoured to ex-
plain, I cannot believe that gout
is at all influenced by sex; but that
if women (in general) were to indulge
in the same excesses and expose
themselves to the occasional or ex-
citing causes, they would be equal-
ly liable to the disease; That the
diathesis is just as likely to exist

in the female, as male sex; and it is only necessary to expose themselves to the same causes, to make this distressing complaint develop itself in all its various phenomena.

I cannot see how those Authors can establish the fact, (by any train of pathological reasoning,) that women are, from any peculiarity of structure, liable to this disease than men; and that eunuchs are entirely exempt from gout: unless they can prove that the primary seat of the disease, is the male organs of generation.

It may be looked upon, as presuming too much, in a young^r and inexperienced man, to set up his opinion, in opposition to older and more

experienced persons in the professions;
And I hope I shall be pardoned if I
have differed in opinion with all,
or any of you, who have been my in-
structors; and who have also spared
no expence or labour, to instil into
the minds of your pupils, the correct
principles of the extensive sciences
to which you belong. I hope further
that you will look upon what I have
ventured to say, on this subject, as
not having proceeded from a dis-
position to advance opinions, inim-
ical to those of any member of the
Faculty; but from a spirit of inves-
tigation - and should I be wrong,
I am not the first ^{who} have erred in
venturing an opinion upon the nature
of this most singular disease.

Gout has been distinguished into
a great many varieties. As Podagra
when the disease existed in the feet;
Phiragra, in the hands; Pechyagra,
in the elbow; Gonagra, in the knee;
Dontagra in the teeth; Cleisagra,
in the articulations of the Clavicles;
Omagra, in the Articulation Humerus;
Rachisagra, in the spine of the
back and Tenontagra in the large
tendons. Now I think it evident,
from the many varieties into which
they have distinguished gout, that
the ancients could have known
no distinction between this disease
and Rheumatism; or if they did,
thought it unnecessary to make
any as these two diseases resemble
each other in a great many re-

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respects. - I think however that
if the following rules are attended
to, that generally, there will be but
little difficulty in distinguishing
Gout, from Rheumatism, altho there
may occur cases wherein we may
find some difficulty in making
a just discrimination.

In the first place we should endeavour to ascertain whether any hereditary predisposition exists; secondly, we should be very particular in learning the symptoms which may have preceded the Lito; and thirdly, we should inquire into the recurrences of the disease, the parts affected, and whether they are subject to any other disease before the Lito, and the nature of that disease

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if any should have existed; all of which
circumstances are usually different
in the two diseases. In gout we are
told, that the pain generally attacks
the small joints, and is not so apt to
shift its situation; but when this
does take place, it generally attacks
the corresponding limb, or perhaps
some of the viscera; We are also
told that the parts are more red
and swollen than in Rheumatism and
that the dyspeptic symptoms, which
rarely precede Rheumatism, are some-
times present, for several days, before
a fit of the gout comes on.

Gout comes on more
frequently in the spring of the year
and in the beginning of winter; and
the period of life at which it most

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commonly appears is from thirty-five
to forty; when it appears earlier
than this, it may be presumed to be
owing to the diathesis existing in an
uncommon degree, or to intemper-
ance.

It is said that gout does not, like
some chronic diseases, wear itself
out by repeated attacks, but acquires
strength with each returning fit, both
with regards to the variety of parts
which it attacks, and as to the degree
of suffering and duration of the fit.

Gout is divided into several
forms, as Tonic and Atonic (or Regular
and Irregular) Retrocedent and
Misplaced.

I believe the principal cir-
cumstance which distinguishes the

regular, from the other varieties of the disease, is the inflammatory affection of the joints; of the second or atonic form of the disease, there are two varieties; the retrocedent and misplaced.

A paroxysm of regular gout sometimes comes "without any warning, but most frequently, I believe, the dyspeptic symptoms, with an unusual coldness of the feet and legs, a numbness or a prickling sensation along the extremities, precedes the attack; lassitude and fatigue are experienced in a great degree upon the least exercise, the urine pallid and the bowels costive.

An attack most commonly comes on at night, or about two or three

8 clock in the morning; the patient
sometimes goes to bed in tolerable
health, and after three or four hours
is awaked by the excruciating pain
which has attacked the joint of the
large toe, heel, or as happens sometimes
the whole foot; this increases in vio-
lence and is succeeded by rigors
and other febrile symptoms with
great throbbing, and severe inflam-
mation in the part. - Sometimes
both feet are affected, but most
commonly but one at a time.

Towards day the pain subsides
a little and the patient falls a-
sleep; then a gentle sweat breaks
out and terminates the paroxysm.
a number of which constitute
a fit of gout. -

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 a number of small
 not and somewhat the
 sleep; then a great deal
 a little and the patient felt a
 towards day the pain
 somewhat but not at a time
 but food was rejected but not
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 another one to be in
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Treatment

Altho I am of the opinion that Gout
itself cannot always, if ever, be en-
tirely eradicated from the system; yet
it is certain that much may be done
towards lessening the violence, and
shortening the duration of the fit, and
by this means meliorating the suffer-
ings of our patient, by other remedies
than those which I think are too frequently
relied on: Patience, and Laurel.—

Active purging would seem to
be one of the most important indica-
tions in the treatment of gout, both
with a view to removing the gastric
affection and relieving pain.—

In this disease (as well as in many
others) nature points out the plan we
should pursue, in (frequently) terminating

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the fit in a spontaneous diarrhoea, or
Cholera morbus. -

It is thought best to commence
the purging with large doses of Calomel
followed up by Chubarb and Magnesia.

It may in some cases, where the pa-
tient is plethoric, and the pulse
demands it, be proper to precede
the purging, by venesection.

The purging should be kept up as
long as the symptoms and the nature
of the discharges demand it. For this
purpose the most drastic articles have
been used, among which, are, Scammony,
Gamboge and Elaterium; all of which
I have no doubt are highly serviceable,
and may be, indispensable to the cure
of the disease.

Emetics have also been used

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in the treatment of gout, and no doubt but they are in some cases of great importance, where there is much gastric disorder.

Sweating is also of great advantage in the treatment of gout, and is considered by some, next in importance to purging; but we should never resort to this, until the violence of the paroxysm is somewhat subdued.

Diuretics are also indicated by the copious discharges of urine which have been observed, as critical in gout, as well as their acknowledged utility in subduing inflammatory action, particularly in rheumatism.

It is said that all the indications which have been mentioned may

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be met, by the famous Bastum of Dr.
Hupson, (Bau medicine) that it not only
purges actively, but sometimes purges,
sweats, and almost invariably increases
the urinary discharge. The composition
of this medicine is still, I believe un-
known, or at least there is no certainty
of its discovery. -

Warm applications to the in-
flamed parts are very useful and cannot
be dispensed with. Scadamore recom-
mends, very highly a preparation of Cam-
phor & Alcohol, in the proportions of 1 part
of the Alcohol, to 3 of Spts. of Camphor, this
is to be warmed and applied to the
part affected. I know a young gen-
tleman in Delaware who is subject to
this disease, who uses the Spts. Turpen-
tine, and says that nothing else will

give him the least relief; he uses as
much as a grain of this in the twenty
four hours.--

Wrapping the inflamed part
up in Carded wool, or cotton will
sometimes give great relief.--

Blisters may sometimes
be necessary where there is danger
of a retrocession; but in such cases
the stimulants should be resorted
to; as the musk-julep, Ether, Opium,
Carbonate of Ammonia, Hot toddy,
&c. The lancet must in some cases be used,
even whilst we are giving the stimulants,
particularly when the disease attacks
the stomach or head, and the pulse
is depressed. When the head is affected
producing Apoplexy it should be treated in
the same way, as apoplexy from any other

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cause. - when it attacks the lungs it produces asthmatic or pneumonic symptoms and should be treated by the remedies for those diseases. -

When the kidneys are affected general & local bleeding, warm bath and warm fomentations, Laudanum or opium, Tinct of Colchicum &c. should be used. - when the Heart is affected, generally, the symptoms of Angina pectoris are felt, as palpitation &c. in this case, bleeding and antispasmodics are demanded, and blisters to the extremities. -

Misplaced Gout, should be treated in the same way as the retrocedent form of the disease, as it is the same thing, but has neglected to make its appearance in the

joint to previous to its attacking
some other part.

We should treat the
atonic form of the disease by
restoring tone to the stomach and
invigorating the system.

This should be
commenced by evacuating the
alimentary Canal and by Tonics,
such as Steel, Bark and many
of the other tonics which are in
use, particularly the bitter tonics.

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